

## REMARKS

Claims 1-12 and 14 are pending in this application, with Claims 1, 11 and 14 being in independent form. Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claim 13 has been canceled and will not be discussed below. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1 and 4-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,375,373 (Izushima), rejected Claims 2 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Izushima, asserting that the height of the elevated sections would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, and rejected Claims 11 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 1,395,793 (Broschart) in view of Izushima. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants submit that amended independent Claim 1, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, is patentably distinct from Izushima at least for the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is an elastomeric gripping element configured to fit over a gripping section of an article. The gripping element includes a cylindrical member having an outer surface and an inner surface and a plurality of elevated sections extending from the outer surface, in which the elevated sections are configured to include intercalated, crossed or hexagon shapes. The gripping element also includes a plurality of flexible protrusions extending from the inner surface capable of resiliently conforming to the gripping section of the article. Support in the specification for the cylindrical shape of the gripping member can be found at least in paragraph 0030 and Figures 1-8; for the shapes of the elevated sections, at least in paragraph 0026; and for the flexible protrusions, at least in paragraph 0024. Applicants submit that nothing has been found in Izushima that would teach or suggest the features of amended Claim 1, in particular, the plurality of flexible protrusions extending from the inner surface of the cylindrical member.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that at least for this reason, Claim 1 is patentable over Izushima.

Applicants submit that Claim 11 is allowable over the cited prior art at least because it is directed to an elastomeric gripping element that includes a cylindrical member having an outer surface and an inner surface, in which a plurality of elevated sections extend from the outer surface and a plurality of flexible protrusions extend from the inner surface, as recited in Claim 1 above.

Claim 14 is also believed to be allowable over the cited prior art because it is directed to an elastomeric gripping element that is configured to fit over a gripping section of an article. In Claim 14, the gripping element includes a cylindrical member having an outer surface and an inner surface, in which a plurality of elevated sections extend from the outer surface, the elevated sections being configured to include intercalated, crossed or hexagon shapes. The inner surface of the cylindrical member also includes a plurality of ribs extending therefrom. Support in the specification for the feature directed to the plurality of ribs extending from an inner surface of the cylindrical member can be found at least in paragraph 0024. If desired, the plurality of ribs extending from the inner surface of the cylindrical member may mate or engage with grooves located on the gripping section of the article.

The other claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual consideration or reconsideration, as the case may be, of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

This Amendment After Final Action is believed to place this application in condition for allowance and, therefore, its entry is believed proper under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

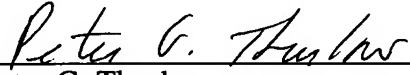
Accordingly, entry of this Amendment After Final Action, as an earnest effort to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe that issues remain outstanding, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned attorney in an effort to resolve such issues and advance the case to issue.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at the phone number listed below. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: July 21, 2005

  
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